

Message

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Subject: USS Lead - Press

East Chicago press clips
US EPA Region 5 – prepared by the Office of Public Affairs
October 27, 2016

NWIT - East Chicago urges parents to get kids tested for lead

AP - Indiana opening 2nd East Chicago center for lead testing

WFYI IPBS - East Chicago Relocation Tests Limited Affordable Housing Market

There are no clips for Pilsen or American Lead

East Chicago urges parents to get kids tested for lead

NWIT [Sarah Reese](http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/east-chicago-urges-parents-to-get-kids-tested-for-lead/article_65baf05f-d0ed-523f-b1dd-31d5de3cb4cc.html)

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/east-chicago-urges-parents-to-get-kids-tested-for-lead/article_65baf05f-d0ed-523f-b1dd-31d5de3cb4cc.html

EAST CHICAGO — A city official said Tuesday only a limited number of children being relocated from the West Calumet Housing Complex so far have had their blood tested for lead.

The news is troubling, East Chicago City Attorney Carla Morgan said, because exposure to lead can cause permanent neurological damage.

Children with confirmed elevated blood lead levels are eligible to receive case management services, including treatment for learning disabilities and in-home assessments to mitigate health risks.

“The whole point is to give kids the best possible shot at life,” Morgan said.

A total of 1,152 people have been tested since the city Health Department began a program last summer, according to data released by the city late last week.

Of those, just 263 were children younger than 7. About 670 children lived at the West Calumet Complex before the city ordered residents to relocate in August.

Of the 263 children tested, preliminary results showed 33 with elevated blood lead levels. Confirmatory tests showed 12 of the 33 had blood lead levels of 5 micrograms per deciliter or more, the level of concern set by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

From 2005 to 2015, preliminary tests showed more than 20 percent of children tested in the census tract that includes the West Calumet Housing Complex had elevated blood lead levels, according to data provided by the Indiana State Department of Health. More than 10 percent of children in the census tract encompassing

two cleanup zones to the east of the complex had elevated blood lead levels during the same time period, data show.

Children younger than 7 are particularly at risk of lead poisoning, because their growing bodies more readily absorb the metal. Pregnant women also should take precautions.

Even low levels of lead in the blood can lead to lower IQ, impair a child's ability to pay attention and cause lower academic achievement, according to the CDC.

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The State Department of Health on Wednesday said it will be expanding its "one-stop shop" for residents in the USS Lead Superfund site, which includes the entire Calumet neighborhood.

Residents can obtain blood testing, birth certificates, vouchers for ID cards and driver's licenses, immunizations and help navigating the health insurance market. Blood samples collected at the clinics will be analyzed at no cost by State Department of Health laboratories.

The one-stop shop schedule is:

— 1 to 6 p.m. Friday at Riley Park, 1005 E. Chicago Ave.

— 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday at the West Calumet Housing Complex recreation center, 4925 Gladiola St.

— 1 to 6 p.m. Nov. 4 at Riley Park.

— 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Nov. 5 at West Calumet Housing Complex recreation center.

— 1 to 6 p.m. Nov. 18 at West Calumet Housing Complex recreation center.

— 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday at Riley Park.

Indiana opening 2nd East Chicago center for lead testing

Associated Press Published: October 27, 2016, 7:26 am

<http://wlf.com/2016/10/27/indiana-opening-2nd-east-chicago-center-for-lead-testing/>

EAST CHICAGO, Ind. (AP) — Indiana health officials say they're offering another location where East Chicago residents affected by elevated levels of lead and arsenic can get help.

The Indiana State Department of Health says the extra location will offer affected residents blood lead testing, flu shots, birth certificates and childhood immunizations. A center already has been available at the West Calumet Housing Complex's recreation center. The new center will be at Riley Park in East Chicago.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has told complex residents that they have until Nov. 30 to relocate after soil was found to be tainted with elevated levels of lead and arsenic. The city of East Chicago is planning to demolish the low-income complex.

The area was contaminated by smelters and other industrial sites that operated for decades.

East Chicago Relocation Tests Limited Affordable Housing Market

WFYI – IPBS ANNIE ROPEIK

[HTTP://WWW.WFYI.ORG/NEWS/ARTICLES/EAST-CHICAGO-RELOCATION-TESTS-LIMITED-AFFORDABLE-HOUSING-MARKET](http://www.wfyi.org/news/articles/east-chicago-relocation-tests-limited-affordable-housing-market)

On a recent rainy day in East Chicago, landlord Clay Brooks drills open a plywood front door on one of a row of vacant houses and ducks inside.

“So this is one that we’re rehabbing,” he says. “As you can see, some things that need to get done. This is a three-bedroom.”

The little house needs basic improvements, like new electrical outlets, smoke detectors and bathroom updates. No one has lived here in a few months. The neighborhood is part of a federal toxic waste cleanup site — a Superfund — but no one here was ordered to move out.

It’s a different story in West Calumet Housing Complex, three blocks away. The Environmental Protection Agency has a similar cleanup plan across the entire Superfund, but the city ordered residents in West Calumet to leave. The complex is slated to be demolished.

Most of West Calumet’s residents are families with children, so they need three-, four- or five-bedroom units — which are few and far between in this area.

As of Oct. 21, the Department of Housing and Urban Development said just 27 families out of about 300 in West Calumet had found new housing within East Chicago. Another nine had moved away to other towns. That leaves about 260 families still searching.

Brooks wants to renovate empty units, like the ones he owns inside the Superfund, to create more local options. But he doesn’t have all the money he needs to get the houses up to code.

“There are definitely things that are necessary to do before we can get anybody in here,” he says.

This whole area is contaminated, though, with lead and arsenic from an old smelting plant. Why would a family move from one place in a toxic waste cleanup area to another?

HUD’s deputy Midwest administrator, Jim Cunningham, says “finding suitable housing is not an easy process.” His agency paid for the city to build West Calumet, making it public housing. But East Chicago doesn’t have enough options like it to absorb everyone who’s moving.

Cunningham says authorities knew this from the start. He says that’s why they gave out housing vouchers for residents to use in other towns, even on the private market, with landlords like Brooks who will accept the vouchers to cover part of their tenants’ rent.

“At the end of the day, this is a Chicago metro region, so there’s plenty of affordable housing,” Cunningham says, or “available housing.”

In fact, the latest State of the Nation’s Housing census from Harvard University showed more than three-quarters of the poorest residents in the Chicago metro area, which includes Lake, Porter, Jasper and Newton counties in Northwest Indiana, spend more than half their income on rent, which constitutes a severe cost burden.

Rent for people making less than \$15,000 a year in that area averages \$770 a month, higher than the value of many vouchers that West Calumet residents received.

HUD's Jim Cunningham says "the voucher makes it affordable" to live in places people couldn't otherwise afford. But Indiana University law professor and former housing discrimination attorney Florence Roisman disagrees.

"You know what those vouchers are called, don't you?" she says. "They're 'get lost' vouchers."

Roisman says landlords aren't required to participate in the voucher program, so residents can't necessarily move anywhere they want.

Eight states and Washington, D.C. bar landlords from discriminating against a renter based on their income source, such as a housing voucher. Indiana does not have any such statute.

It also doesn't have inclusionary zoning, which would require new housing developments to include a mix of affordable and subsidized units, no matter where they're built. That measure exists in states like California, New York and Maryland, and it's also part of Bloomington's long-term affordable housing goals. But the only other federal tool to create affordable housing is low-income housing tax credits, which Roisman argues aren't much better than vouchers.

Unlike inclusionary zoning, she says, they don't force developers to put housing in safe neighborhoods with good schools, amenities or infrastructure.

"It's making it impossible for people of color — for the most part, low-income people of color — to live any place except in a neighborhood that's been labeled, 'this is for low-income people of color,'" Roisman says. "And those neighborhoods are starved of resources."

U.S. Rep. Todd Young has proposed an extra \$8.5 million in low-income housing tax credits for East Chicago and Lake County over the next two years to stimulate development. But his bill doesn't name specific neighborhoods where the credits should be used.

And even if that bill passes, landlords like Clay Brooks in East Chicago wouldn't qualify — they're too small-scale. Brooks has reached out to the city about getting money for repairs at his individual units, but hasn't heard back.

And he's unsure about investing too much in renovations. He's worried that it's only a matter of time before more contamination crops up, and more neighborhoods get evacuated.

"So it's like — well, do we really rehab these units, and what if the people aren't available to rent the units? You know what I mean?" he says. "So we're, like, stuck in a hard place, I guess."

What's more, Brooks grew up right down the street, in a house where his elderly mother still lives. He planned to take a break from renovations soon to go get their blood tested for lead.

Sincerely,

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